



PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE





LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Identify the dangers and consequences of prescription drug abuse





ARMY PRINCIPLES

(AR 600-85, para 1-8)

“Abuse of alcohol or the use of illicit drugs by both military and civilian personnel is inconsistent with Army Values, the Warrior Ethos, and the standards of performance, discipline, and readiness necessary to accomplish the Army’s mission.”





DRUG TESTING

Army Drug Testing will identify the presence of a drug in your system. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to ensure your prescription is current while taking medication or you can be charged with drug use.

Soldiers that test positive for these drugs will have their medical records reviewed and possibly be interviewed by a Medical Review Officer (MRO).





PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

- Use of prescription drugs in ways not intended by prescribing doctor
- Used for non-medical purposes



Prescription drug abuse: Becoming the #1 Drug problem among young Americans.

- Nearly 7 million Americans are abusing prescription drugs*—more than the number who are abusing cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, Ecstasy, and inhalants, combined. That 7 million was just 3.8 million in 2000, an 80 percent increase in just 6 years.
- Narcotic pain-relief prescriptions for injured U.S. troops have jumped from 30,000 a month to 50,000 since the Iraq war began, raising concerns for the drugs' potential abuse and addiction.



ILLEGAL SITUATIONS

- Possession/Use of medication without a prescription
- Giving prescription to another individual regardless of their apparent need

GUILTY?

Result- charged with distribution of a controlled substance - subject to severe fines and jail time

The illegal use of Prescription drugs or any drug goes against Army Values and Warrior Pride



Prescription drug abuse varies from taking a friend's prescription painkiller for your backache to disrupting the time-release formula of a drug to speed up absorption by:

- crushing pills
- snorting the powder to get high
- chewing the pills
- dissolving pills in water and injecting

<http://blip.tv/file/1557422>



RISK FACTORS FOR PRESCRIPTION ABUSE

- History of past or present addictions
- Chronic pain management
- Age group 18-25
- Working in a health care setting
- The belief that prescription drugs are safer





MOST COMMONLY ABUSED PRESCRIPTION DRUGS:

- OPIOIDS, prescribed to treat pain.
- CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS, prescribed treat anxiety and sleep disorders.
- STIMULANTS, prescribed to treat sleep disorders and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).



OPIOIDS- prescribed to treat pain.

The following medications are referred to as prescription narcotics:

- a. Morphine- (e.g., **MS contin, kadian, and avinza**)-used before and after surgical procedures to alleviate severe pain
- b. Codeine- treat mild pain, cough suppressant, or diarrhea
- c. Oxycodone- (e.g., **oxycontin, percodan, and percocet**) treat moderate to severe chronic pain
- d. Hydrocodone -(e.g.,**vicodin, lortab, and lorcet**)- relieve moderate to severe pain



OPIOID SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE:

Constipation

Depression

Low blood pressure

Decreased respiration rate

Confusion



DANGERS OF OPIOID ABUSE

- Increased risk of choking
- Loss of menstrual periods and fertility
- Severe respiratory depression or death following a large single dose

***Opioid painkillers cause more drug overdose deaths than cocaine and heroin combined!**



CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) DEPRESSANTS- prescribed to treat anxiety and sleep disorders

Sedatives and Tranquilizers:

- a. Barbiturates (**mebaral and nembutal**)- anxiety, tension, and sleep disorders
- b. Benzodiazepines (**valium, xanax, prosom**)- anxiety, acute stress reactions, panic attacks, and short-term treatment of sleep
- c. Newer Sleep medications (e.g., **ambien, sonata, and lunesta**)



SEDATIVES AND TRANQUILIZERS SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS OF USE OR ABUSE:

- Impaired judgment
- Drowsiness
walking pattern
- Involuntary and rapid movement of the eyeball
- Confusion
- Unsteady



DANGERS OF SEDATIVES AND TRANQUILIZER ABUSE

- Memory problems
- Abnormal temperature regulation
- Seizures following a rebound in brain activity after reducing or discontinuing use
- Overdose can cause coma or death



STIMULANTS

**Prescribed to treat sleep disorders
and attention-deficit hyperactivity
disorder (ADHD)**

- a. Dextroamphetamine (e.g., **dexadrine and adderall**)
- b. Methylphenidate (e.g., **ritalin and concerta**)



STIMULANTS

SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

- Weight loss
- Agitation
- Irregular heartbeat
- Irritability
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure
-



DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION STIMULANT ABUSE

- Hallucinations
failure
- Lethal seizures
stroke
- Cardiovascular
- Increased risk of
- Tremors



Watch for **Signs & Symptoms** of prescription drug abuse

Pain reliever
abuse:

Constricted pupils, nausea and
vomiting, and respiratory depression.

Stimulant
abuse:

Anxiety and delusions, flushed skin,
and chest pain with heart palpitations.

Depressant
abuse:

Slurred speech, dizziness, and
respiratory depression.



WARNING SIGNS Of Prescription DRUG ABUSE

- Constantly "losing" prescriptions, so more prescriptions must be written
- Seeking prescriptions from more than one doctor
- Taking higher doses despite warnings
- Stealing, forging, or selling prescriptions
- Excessive mood swings



METHODS OF ACQUIRING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR ABUSE INCLUDE:

- doctor-shopping
prescription
- traditional drug-dealing
Internet
- theft from pharmacies
relatives
- illicitly acquiring
- drugs via the
- from friends or



HELPFUL TIPS

- Always follow medication directions carefully.
- Do not increase or decrease doses without talking with your doctor.
- Do not stop taking medication on your own.
- Do not crush or break pills unless directed by a physician.
- Be clear about the drug's effects on driving and other daily tasks.
- Learn about the drug's potential interactions with alcohol, other prescription medicines, and over-the-counter medicines.



If you require additional information about Prescription drug abuse or any other drug, contact the Army Substance Abuse Program or visit the Army Center for Substance Abuse Programs website at www.acsap.army.mil.





WARRIOR

P

ersonal Courage: Possess the Personal Courage not to use drugs or abuse alcohol and to notify the Chain of Command of Soldiers that do.

R

espect: Show your Respect to the Army, your unit, fellow Soldiers, and yourself by staying drug free and drinking responsibly.

I

ntegrity: Stay true to the Army Values and Warrior Ethos by supporting the Army's drug and alcohol policies.

D

uty: Do your duty as a Soldier and stay mentally and physically tough by not using drugs or abusing alcohol.

E

xcellence: Exhibit honorable behavior on and off duty - don't be a substance abuser!